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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 368th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 16 June 1992, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria)

- Attendance by non-members of the Committee
- General exchange of views (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

ATTENDANCE BY NON-MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to inform members that we have received notes verbales from the Permanent Representatives of Bolivia, Cuba and Kazakhstan, in which they have requested permission to attend the current session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as observers.

I should therefore like to suggest that, in conformity with past practice, we invite the delegations of those countries to attend the current session and to address the Committee as appropriate. This is, of course, without prejudice to further requests of this nature and does not involve any decision by the Committee concerning status.

If there is no objection, we shall proceed accordingly.

It was so decided.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: The first speaker on my list is the representative of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), on whom I now call.

Mr. FESTER (International Astronautical Federation (IAF)): The International Astronautical Federation (IAF) is composed of 130 member associations from over 30 countries. We have many technical committees which specialize in space science and engineering, looking at operations, communications, and exploration. I would like to say that we were happy to organize the special symposium at this year's session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and also recognize our obligation to organize the symposium again next year, 1993, on communications. We look forward to that.

In conjunction with the International Academy of Astronautics and the International Institute of Space Law, we have joined with the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) to organize the World Space Congress in

(Mr. Fester, IAF)

Washington, D.C., which, as most members know, will be held from 28 August to 5 September this year. This World Space Congress is dedicated to discovery, exploration and cooperation. It will be held in celebration of the International Space Year (ISY) and will be the premier event of the ISY in the United States. This historic Congress will combine, for the first time, the biennial plenary meeting of the Committee on Space Research and the annual Congress of the International Astronautical Federation. It will also provide a forum for many cooperative projects initiated by the Space Agency Forum for the International Space year. At the same time, it will review the latest results and issues in the area of space science, engineering, law, and policy for future space programmes into the next century.

Congress attendees will indeed be treated to a rich programme of scientific, engineering and legal sessions augmented by a series of distinguished lectures and panels by the world's leading thinkers and space policy makers. An impressive gathering of thousands of space scientists, engineers, administrators, and policy makers representing developed and developing countries alike is expected.

The Congress is hosted and organized by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, and held under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States. Other associated organizations include the International Academy of Astronautics and the International Institute of Space Law.

It will be a most significant gathering of space scientific, engineering, and policy leadership. It will be the first event that has ever been sponsored jointly by IAF and COSPAR. We anticipate somewhere on the order of 4,000 attendees. There will be 3,000 invited and contributed papers will be presented in 25 simultaneous sessions over the 9 days of the meeting.

(Mr. Fester, IAF)

There will be a comprehensive discussion of the areas critical to the advancement of space science and technology. I have already mentioned that I believe that we have really pulled together a distinguished lecture and panel series. The lectures will occur just before lunch every day, while most of the panels will occur towards the end of the day. These will spotlight the international space community's notable experts.

We have organized a developing countries forum, which will be held in cooperation with the United Nations just prior to the World Space Congress and as part of that Congress. We believe that that will provide significant benefits to the developing countries in that the approach here is to try to develop the interchange between people in order to make it happen, actually to get something going and make it happen in this arena.

Associated events will include subjects such as outer space law, space life sciences, human space flight, and the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. We have over 100,000 square feet of exhibits representing the advanced space and technology concepts from the spacefaring nations. We believe that this Congress will be a foundation for expanding global space cooperative initiatives.

The IAF invites members of the Committee to participate. Our President and the President of COSPAR are in Washington, D.C. today, at the White House, inviting participation from that quarter. But, on behalf of the IAF, I invite those here today to participate in this historic global space Congress, which should foster the peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit of mankind.

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt): It is a great pleasure and honour for me to speak today in the outer space Committee under your chairmanship, Sir. This is the first time I have spoken in this Committee, which for over 25 years has been under very distinguished Austrian Chairmen.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

As we begin our debate on how to preserve outer space for exclusively peaceful uses, we have to acknowledge the complexity of the subject. We have to acknowledge the fact that outer space, when this Committee started work on elaborating the Treaty, was still a completely new subject. We are aware of the double-edged nature of progress in space technology; it entails both military and non-military applications, and this is a matter that the outer space Treaty aimed at handling. This underscores the intricate and multifaceted consequences of advanced space technology and the interwoven concerns shared by the Conference on Disarmament and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, with their common objective of maintaining outer space for exclusively peaceful uses.

Over two decades have passed since the entry into force of the Treaty; the Treaty recognizes that outer space is the common heritage of mankind, and that was, to my knowledge, the first time that that concept was used. It is in the common interest of all mankind to continue the progress in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful ends, which should be carried out for the benefit of all peoples.

The Treaty also recognized, as I said, the implied military and civilian uses: this was at a time when space technology was still at an embryonic stage. While progress in space technology has opened up new domains for peaceful cooperation, far beyond what was envisaged in the 1960s, the double-edged nature of this technology underscores the need for safeguards against an arms race in outer space. Unfortunately, in spite of the fact that two decades have passed since the entry into force of the Treaty, international cooperation in outer space has not been commensurate with the challenges posed to the legal regime adopted at the time.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

The first aspect of that legal regime, which aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space, has suffered from what might now be called the discrepancy in article IV of the Treaty, which implicitly allows for the deployment of some weapons in outer space while prohibiting it on the Moon and other celestial bodies. It is also imperative to recognize that the second aspect of that legal regime, which governs the peaceful use of outer space, has not kept up with the pace of technological development, thus allowing national interests to dull the advancement of principles governing international cooperation in this regard.

Egypt has, from the very beginning, in December 1966, when the outer space Treaty was being adopted in the General Assembly, pointed out this discrepancy and said that it would not come out against the Treaty but that it did hope that it was a beginning and that action would be taken to plug the loophole in article IV. The matter, as we all know, was referred to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva; it has been discussed there for several years now. For a number of years, Egypt was the coordinator of the Group of 21, which deals with this matter, and, unfortunately, so far, there has been no progress whatsoever on the matter.

My delegation has, from the beginning, not been very enthusiastic about the fact that the matter was referred to the Conference on Disarmament, on the basis that the Treaty itself was elaborated in this Committee and adopted by the General Assembly, and that the General Assembly was perhaps the appropriate channel. However, we could see that there were certain techniques and expertise that were needed from the Conference on Disarmament, and that cooperation between the two organs could be to the benefit of the common objective that we all seek. That is why we are cooperating there and why

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

we are cooperating here, but we would like to see some progress in this very important matter.

The work of the Committee must be accelerated and given further momentum. Items on the agendas of the Subcommittees cannot be allowed to remain there without any real results until the issues themselves become outdated. It is a matter of particular regret for my delegation that we see some of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 still unfulfilled; a decade after their adoption, more emphasis should be given to the means necessary to ensure their full implementation.

The tenth anniversary of the Conference is also an opportune moment for discussing means to increase the international cooperation needed for the speedier implementation of the recommendations, for helping developing countries to enhance their expertise and infrastructure in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space, for ensuring the free exchange of scientific and technological information and for ensuring that there are appropriate arrangements for the transfer of technologies to promote the use and development of space technology in developing countries.

My delegation commends the efforts of the Secretariat in organizing fellowships for exposure to space technology and applications. We look forward to increases in the number of fellowships. In addition, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretariat and the Head of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Mr. Jasentuliyana, for their efforts in developing an international space information system, including both information within the United Nations system and access to external databases.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

It is opportune to take this moment in the general debate to refer to the importance of cooperation in the field of remote sensing. Developing countries need to share technologies and cooperate with national, regional and international centres working in this field. Excessive commercialization of remote-sensing data and information has to be avoided in order not to impose a further burden on developing countries.

The Egyptian centre for remote sensing has always cooperated with various national and international centres in exchanging information and coordinating programmes. The centre intends to continue such cooperation in the future, and my delegation hopes that the United Nations will always be in close cooperation with it and provide it with the necessary assistance.

My delegation considers that certain revisions might need to be agreed upon regarding the principles concerning the use of nuclear power sources. The appropriate time for such a revision might be after the whole set of principles is finalized. We should like to emphasize in this regard that the International Atomic Energy Agency is bound to play a pivotal role in the implementation of the principles agreed upon in this field.

My delegation welc es the increased convergence of views on the issue of space debris. We find it a promising development, and hope that fruitful and constructive discussions will soon start on all aspects of this issue. Such discussion will be an important step in safeguarding the space environment and preventing collisions in outer space.

My delegation will follow the work of this session closely, and we hope that in respect of all the issues that are under consideration there will be, this time, at least a possibility of seeing some progress in the work of the two Subcommittees.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to thank Ambassador Elaraby specifically for two reaons: the first reason is that the Permanent Representative of Egypt has served for very many years on this Committee, as he himself said; and, the second - and I do not hesitate to say this at this stage - is that he has a very high degree of experience in these matters as a result of all those years he has served. We are glad to welcome him back to our Committee.

Mr. BOYER (France) (interpretation from French): At the outset, Sir, the French delegation wishes to express its satisfaction at seeing you in the Chair. The success of the Committee's session held last year in Graz under your chairmanship is the best guarantee of the success of the present session.

The Committee is meeting in the context of the International Space Year, which has already given rise to many events and will continue to do so. Would it not be appropriate, in the light of the success of the Year, to make the structures established for the occasion permanent?

The French delegation approaches our agenda with confidence and caution. We note significant progress in the discussions held in the Committee's subsidiary bodies, but consider that they will remain tentative until they have resulted in a formal agreement; it is an obvious paradox that the further things advance the more cautious we need to be.

In the view of my delegation, that rule should guide our work on nuclear power sources in outer space, where disagreement is waning and where one might be tempted to make haste in order to reach a comprehensive agreement this year at any cost. The French delegation considers it preferable to continue to work towards that result in the spirit of compromise that motivates all our delegations and that has already enabled us to make good headway towards solid consensus - even if we might legitimately regret that we have not moved more quickly than we have.

The French delegation also welcomes the development this year of mutual understanding among delegations on subjects which hitherto had given rise only to sterile exchanges. These include: the delimitation of outer space, on which a new procedure for discussion could yield progress; international

(Mr. Boyer, France)

cooperation in space, where frank and fruitful exchanges of views have enabled us to clear the way and elucidate the debate; and space debris, on which there could be developments during coming sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Those are examples of patience rewarded; of immobile statues inspired with life; of tongues untied.

A Marshall of France, whose authorship of a victory was contested by some, replied that he did not know who had won the battle, but that he certainly knew who had lost it. For our part, we know that much of the progress achieved since Graz was your doing, Mr. Chairman, through the impetus you gave our work, and the French delegation is happy to take this opportunity to thank you.

Mr. TELLES RIBEIRO (Brazil): Allow me at the outset, Mr. Chairman, to express the satisfaction of my delegation at seeing you once again presiding over the deliberations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Your well known diplomatic qualities and experience guarantee that once again this year the Committee's work will proceed in a harmonious and efficient way, permitting the successful completion of the important tasks that will face us in the coming days. My delegation wishes to thank you also for the thorough and useful statement you made this morning.

A word of acknowledgement is also in order for the Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, Mr. John Carver, and for the Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee, Mr. Vaclav Mikulka, for their skilful stewardship of those important subsidiary bodies of the Committee this year.

(Mr. Telles Ribeiro, Brazil)

We also commend the valuable work of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, under the direction of Mr. Jasentuliyana, and the tireless efforts of the Expert on Space Applications, Mr. Abiodun, as extensively reported upon this morning.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Committee for the election of my colleague Mr. Edmundo Fujita as the new Rapporteur to replace Mr. Flavio Perri, who has been assigned to other functions in Brazil. Let me on this occasion also thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the kind remarks you made to Mr. Perri regarding his past work as Rapporteur; I shall be delighted to convey them to him in Brazil. It has been a great honour for Brazil to provide officers to fill that important position, which enables us to contribute, under your guidance, Sir, to the success of the Committee's work.

In recent times we have been witnessing momentous transformations on the international scene. The ultimate reaches of those transformations cannot as yet be clearly discerned. We are living through a Janus-faced period in which the potential for conflict and the potential for collaboration are simultaneously present. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that the international community does not miss this unique opportunity to overcome the remnants of past confrontation and to nurture the seeds of future cooperation.

In that regard, outer space, as the province of all mankind, the exploration of which must be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, should be preserved for peaceful purposes only. And here I refer to peace not simply as the absence of war but as a dynamic process that

(Mr. Telles Ribeiro, Brazil)

involves a continuous search for improvement in the material and spiritual conditions of all peoples. Solidarity and cooperation should be the fundamental attitudes that shape the activities of men both in outer space and on Earth.

The agenda before us contemplates, inter alia, consideration of the reports of the Legal Subcommittee and the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, which contain the results of the substantive deliberations held this year. As far as the Legal Subcommittee is concerned, we hope to see the successful completion of the set of principles for the use of nuclear power sources. We are looking forward to reaching a final consensus on this matter. We do not underestimate the difficulties lying ahead, as indicated by the lengthy discussions we have had over the past 12 years. It may be that on previous occasions we were a bit over-optimistic about the end of the negotiations, but we must now try our best to ensure an outcome that will reflect the considerations of all parties involved.

As to the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the delegation of Brazil would like to draw the attention of member States to its working method and mandate. Being an intergovernmental body aiming primarily at discussing policies and guidelines for international cooperation in space activities, the Subcommittee should devote its main efforts to providing agreed technical parameters for the development of international space law.

(Mr. Telles Ribeiro, Brazil)

In this connection, having just hosted the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, my country deems it important to pay due attention to the relationship between the terrestrial and space environments. Consequently, we agree with other States that have already spoken that an item devoted to the question of space debris should be included on the Subcommittee's agenda, with a view to preparing future guidelines.

The Brazilian commitment to international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space is reflected in the detailed report of the United Nations Expert on Space Applications. My country remains deeply committed to contributing to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. In this regard, I am pleased to inform the Committee that the National Institute of Space Research has renewed its offers of scholarships for the biennium 1992-1993 and intends to continue actively participating in the Programme. We encourage all States, especially those with more advanced space and financial capacities, to enhance their participation in and support for this very important Programme.

My delegation also wishes to take this opportunity to inform the Committee that the Brazilian Government has submitted to the National Congress a proposal for the restructuring of the Brazilian space activities. The future Brazilian Space Agency will encompass all space research institutions and university laboratories, with a view to coordinating all national efforts in space exploration under a single civilian body.

Finally, my delegation wishes to pay tribute to the commendable work of the Secretariat, especially in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 and in the organization of the activities to commemorate the International Space Year. In this context, I should also like to inform the Committee that the National Institute for Space Research of Brazil organized

(Mr. Telles Ribeiro, Brazil)

with the Joint Research Centre of Europe the World Forest Watch Conference on remote sensing monitoring, which took place last May in Brazil.

Our Committee will be addressing in the two weeks ahead of us important questions related to the strengthening of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The new climate of dialogue and understanding that has been prevailing in many fields of the activities of the United Nations should once again prevail in the Committee's deliberations this year. Under your skilful leadership, Sir, and with the constructive disposition of all delegations here present, I am sure that our work at this thirty-fifth session will achieve significant results that will enhance the creative potentials of space cooperation for the furtherance of mankind's progress on Earth.

Mr. HIENSCH (Netherlands): It is with pleasure that the delegation of the Netherlands sees you, Sir, once again chairing the meetings of the Committee. I wish also to welcome the other officers of the Committee, and in particular the new Rapporteur, Mr. Edmundo Fujita of Brazil.

My delegation is addressing the Committee in this plenary session after world attention has been focused over the past two and one half weeks on events at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janiero. Although the correlation between the Committee and the Conference might not be immediately obvious, with the exception of the active involvement of Mr. Flavio Perri, in the view of the Netherlands, the concern shown at the Conference in Rio for the preservation of the Earth's environment serves as a source of inspiration for other, less well-known to the general public, forums such as this, dealing with, amongst other things, the preservation of our space environment.

(Mr. Hiensch, Netherlands)

The Netherlands delegation would like to draw on the perceived parallel between the Rio Conference and the Committee a bit further. The Conference is a fine example of the growing realization by mankind that international cooperation is required in order to be able to tackle environmental problems caused by pollution. Only concerted action by the international community will help preserve the environment for generations to come. The same approach ought to be taken where outer space is concerned. Although it seems at times that outer space is, literally at least, far removed from us, its environmental problems are here with us today. The results of space pollution are undeniably having an effect on the Earth's environment. Indeed, now is the time to realize that both the Earth and the space environment are interlocked in such a way that we cannot hope to cure the one without paying equal attention to the other.

Not to put too fine a point on it, my delegation is anxious to see the Committee deal with the problem of space debris, in particular as part of its regular agenda in the future. The problem of space debris has come to be recognized as one of the major challenges to the future exploration of outer space, which is particularly important, as everyone here will be aware, to developing countries, especially in the field of remote sensing. My delegation equally realizes, however, that consensus on this vital matter is the key to success when it comes to finding creative and constructive solutions to the problems before us. The Netherlands delegation therefore calls upon the Committee to come to an agreement on the way in which a discussion on the problem of space debris can be started. The image of the Rio Conference ought to be vivid in our minds in this respect, as time is of the essence and cannot be wasted with regard to environmental matters, be they related to the Earth or to outer space.

(Mr. Hiensch, Netherlands)

Allow me to touch briefly upon another aspect of the workings of this Committee, which my delegation deems vital. It will come as no surprise to the Committee that it ocncerns the discussion of nuclear power sources (NPS). My delegation was pleased to be able to witness during this year's meetings of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee a constructive dialogue taking place between various delegations with regard to NPS principles. It is the sincere wish of my delegation that a final agreement will be reached during this plenary session on all outstanding draft principles concerning NPS.

My delegation would like to express the hope that this session will help contribute to the preparation of the activities before the Committee and that at the same time this session will help the Committee in facing up to the important challenges before it.

Mr. HERNANDEZ BASAVE (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): We are meeting once again in the Committee to consider ways of broadening international cooperation on the uses of outer space in order to implement, under United Nations auspices, various programmes in this regard, such as the promotion of academic research and the exchange of scientific and technical knowledge in space matters and to seek solutions to the legal problems stemming from the exploration and utilization of outer space. We are confident, Sir, that under your experienced guidance we shall be able to revitalize the Committee and successfully carry out the work of the current session.

The international climate today requires that we redouble efforts to strengthen the United Nations as a whole. We are living in a stage of history marked by the breaking up of political systems and the rise of new ideas of

(Mr. Hernandez Basave, Mexico)

international relations at the global level, in which multilateral forums have an extremely important role to play. In these days of change and readjustment in international relations, transformation has become the characteristic of our times.

(Mr. Hernandez Basave, Mexico)

Thus, the end of the cold war has made friends and allies of former enemies and has provided a historic opportunity for common sense to prevail and for realizing the long-cherished hope of freeing mankind from the threat of nuclear destruction. The growing understanding among the planet's stronger Powers is also resulting in a transformation of the United Nations, one in which we are witnessing a spirit of cooperation and consultation in solving the problems that threaten world peace and security.

Although some progress has been achieved in that direction, great impediments remain towards revitalizing the United Nations on its proper path. Together with activities in the political and security spheres, we must tackle with greater determination the urgent questions of economic and social development if we truly wish to achieve international peace and security and to strengthen the spirit of international cooperation in which the Organization was created in 1945. In order to achieve that goal, all States must participate in creating the new international structure free of prerogatives or exclusive areas for some; we must revitalize all the organs of the United Nations and not only some of them.

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space is a body that, given a sufficient dose of political will by its members, can achieve tangible and extremely useful results in the day-to-day activities of all the inhabitants of our planet, including support for the agreements reached with regard to the protection of the environment at the recent Rio de Janeiro summit meeting. This, in our opinion, is a proper forum in which to elaborate a legal framework to regulate the many activities in outer space and one that will ensure a just and equitable distribution of the benefits derived from space activities. Similarly, in this forum we could develop effective programmes of

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international cooperation in order to ensure that the space sciences are developed in all countries and that their applications can help to support the economic and social development of all peoples. Unfortunately, actual experience has so far given rise to slight satisfaction with the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and it is only the Powers that possess the technology and that can control its applications that have been able to benefit fully from the utilization of outer space. Of particular concern to my delegation is the fact that there are no signs of change in the attitudes of some of the major space Powers that would enable us to revitalize the Committee.

In this context, referring to the work of the Legal Subcommittee, we must deplore the paucity of progress achieved in our deliberations. On the one hand we have the fact that the world's greatest space Power feels that the consideration of the legal aspects related to the principle that the exploration and use of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries - the new item on its agenda - should be confined to an exchange of views and not used to examine the possibilities of establishing a legal framework in this regard. That creates an obstacle to the substantive consideration of the issue and, thus, an obstacle to the gradual development of international space law.

Similarly, we are concerned at the fact that we have not yet been able to elaborate the principles governing the use of nuclear-energy sources in outer space and that negotiations are currently focused on a United States proposal designed to limit the scope of the principles to those nuclear-energy sources designed to generate electrical energy aboard space objects. In addition to

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legally weakening the future set of principles in this field,. we are of the opinion that this can also delay their ultimate adoption.

As we all know, there has still been no progress with regard to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit owing to the differing views that prevail on the two questions involved, notwithstanding the flexibility demonstrated by the equatorial countries with regard to the geostationary orbit and notwithstanding the constructive proposal recently put forward by the delegation of Colombia. In light of that, we cannot say that the Legal Subcommittee - that is, the 53 countries that make it up - has fully carried out its mandate.

The situation is even more discouraging in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. There has been no significant advance with regard to any of the eleven substantive items on its agenda. The manner in which most of these eleven subjects have been dealt with has degenerated into a mere exchange of academic opinions among a restricted group of experts via the kind of technical presentations that have now become customary in that Subcommittee. We recognize the academic value of such presentations, but we feel that they do not represent a full compliance with that Subcommittee's mandate. Nor can our consideration of questions directly concerned with international cooperation, such as those pertaining to the Programme on Space Applications and the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82), enable us to affirm that we are fully complying with our mandate.

As we all know, that Programme has a very modest budget, which prevents it from fully implementing those recommendations as well as from undertaking

(Mr. Hernandez Basave, Mexico)

new activities. For that reason, the exchanges of information and professional training in space sciences being promoted within the framework of the United Nations are not making much headway. In that connection, we should like to state once again that it is only through a demonstration of true political will on the part of all the Committee's members, and especially the major space Powers, that the Committee will be able to achieve the progressive development of international space law and broaden the scope of programmes of international cooperation now in place under the auspices of the United Nations.

As we have pointed out on previous occasions, my country is convinced of the validity of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 and of the benefits to be derived from the many activities being carried out under the Programme on Space Applications. In 1993 the Govermment of Mexico, in cooperation with the Programme on Space Applications, will hold a seminar-workshop on the applications of space science and technology in respect of natural disasters, with special emphasis on communications. That seminar-workshop will benefit from the participation of some 30 experts from Latin America and the Caribbean and from some developed countries from outside the region, as well as governmental and non-governmental bodies concerned with space-related issues.

With regard to the recommendation of the General Assembly on the establishment of regional training centres in space science and technology, my delegation has in the past expressed the interest of my Government in Mexico serving as headquarters for the projected regional centre for Latin America and the Caribbean. Last May we had the honour of welcoming the evaluation mission entrusted with obtaining further information on offers received,

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in order to facilitate the final decision on the location of the headquarters and to promote the obtaining of the indispensable external financing that will ensure the centre's optimal development. The mission visited the Mexican Communications Institute, which my Government has offered as the headquarters of the projected regional centre, and other important academic institutions that would provide the centre's work with human, technical and financial support. With regard to the offer made by the Government of Mexico, my delegation would like to reiterate Mexico's commitment to the promotion of genuine international coooperation in the use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes.

(Mr. Hernandez Basave, Mexico)

The Mexican scientific community entrusted with the study of matters pertaining to space sciences has welcomed International Space Year with enthusiasm. Last 20 February, my country's major scientific and academic institutions formed the Committee on International Space Year, and its activities will be coordinated by the Mexican Communications Institute. Among the first activities organized by that Committee were a symposium on the applications of space technology in the field of health, a workshop on orbital dynamics, a meeting of the Latin American Satellite Services Association, an international congress on aeronautics and space, and a seminar on the demilitarization of outer space. We trust that the observance of International Space Year and the world community's increasing attention to environmental issues will contribute to the inclusion on our 1993 agenda of an item on space debris, which poses a threat to the Earth and space environments.

We find ourselves at a crucial juncture in history. International relations are going through a period of transition towards a new international world order. Now that the cold war is behind us, now that the international situation is marked by increasing understanding, we have the opportunity to achieve a more civilized coexistence. In so doing, it will be necessary to promote the strengthening of international law and of international cooperation for the benefit of the economic and social development of all peoples and, above all, to abandon such militant concepts as the policy of nuclear deterrence, on which some States have for several decades now based their national security, despite the fact that that policy has led to the squandering of untold human and financial resources and has been a permanent aspect of insecurity for the rest of the world.

(Mr. Hernandez Basave, Mexico)

In this connection, we are concerned that, in order to proceed with the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), including the option of bilateral cooperation between former adversaries, there is now emerging the possibility of repudiating agreements once concluded to maintain a supposed strategic stability between the military super-Powers. I refer specifically to the 1972 Treaty on the limitation of anti-ballistic-missile systems. If that agreement is scrapped, not only will the present legal regime governing space activities be weakened, but a security policy of the cold-war era will be perpetuated, and this at a time when it is urgent that we adopt a new way of thinking in the conduct of international relations.

In my delegation's opinion, we shall not have peace if preparations for war and destruction continue and if the squandering of untold human and financial resources in military activities does not stop - resources that should be channelled towards the economic and social development of all the peoples of Planet Earth.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the academicians and experts who yesterday participated in the commemorative meeting on International Space Year, and to congratulate Mr. Edmundo Fujita on his election as Rapporteur of our Committee.

Mr. REY (Colombia): My delegation and I are very pleased to see you here once again, Mr. Chairman, presiding over the meetings of this Committee, something you began doing so very wisely at the Graz session last year, which, fortunately, we were pleased to attend, and where we welcomed your experience in guiding such meetings and enjoyed all the beauty of your wonderful country.

My delegation and I also wish to express our gratitude and thanks to those speakers who yesterday pointed out all the various activities being carried out, within the framework of the International Space Year, by both the

(Mr. Rey, Colombia)

United Nations and this Committee. It believes it is fitting to underscore just how important this is, for day after day and statement after statement, we are made aware of advances in space technology pointing the way towards new plans of action for mankind's development. My main concern is whether we are moving at a pace commensurate with developments in space activities.

I have no doubt that one of the most important issues we are focusing on in this Committee is the question of nuclear power sources. This morning the representatives of your country, Mr. Chairman, pointed out that the question had been before the Committee the longest, without resolution. The 1967 outer space Treaty, for example, did not require this much deliberation. Nevertheless, I believe that, with the spirit animating all delegations involved in deliberating such issues in the Committee - we hope that this year in commemoration of International Space Year - a resolution of such an important issue may be arrived at. It seems to me that if the deliberations and the discussions on the item open up a bit more, and if we expand somewhat the club, or petit comité, we shall be able to reach agreement on this question, which is of such interest and importance to all countries and mankind as a whole.

Secondly, a new item is before the Committee; the Argentine delegation has been raising the question with some insistence for a number of years now. I refer to the item on space debris. I believe that this is a question that the Committee will have to tackle, because there is no doubt that it will lead to and be linked with other issues before the Committee that are indissolubly intertwined and must therefore be dealt with as a whole. The question, for example, of the geostationary orbit - which is of such importance to my country - is one that is very closely linked with that of space debris.

(Mr. Rey, Colombia)

My delegation considers that the Conference on Environment and Development, held recently in Brazil, was a success. There is no doubt that, since the scientific progress in space matters can be used to benefit the environment, the goals set by the Conference can all be achieved. I believe that the consideration of the item on outer space should embrace environment questions for the benefit of the environment.

(Mr. Rey, Colombia)

This year, a series of extremely important events have occurred in the scientific field. The representative of the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT) pointed this morning to a fundamental question - the rescue of a satellite adrift in a low orbit. That satellite may not have been of service at the time, but it was rescued through the joint technological efforts of several countries and is now used for the benefit of all mankind. It seems to me that these are all very important activities that are part of the history of space and its evolution, of which we are an intimate component.

Last year, my delegation, together with other members of the Group of 77, presented a proposal on the geostationary orbit. This issue had been stagnant, so to speak, and was very difficult to deal with and solve. And yet I feel that the position of those of us who presented that document has opened up the manner in which this issue is handled. At the most recent meeting of the Legal Subcommittee in Geneva, we saw at least the possibility of carrying out some substantive analyses in a different way to that in which they had been approached by the Subcommittee in the past.

In support of this, my delegation provided the Chairman of the Working Group on the geostationary orbit with a document that we hope he himself will present. In this document, we summarize the various questions that have arisen for the past 18 months on this matter. This document is meant only as a working paper that the Committee, Subcommittee and the various Working Groups may wish to have before them and develop further and, we hope, positively. This is not a taboo. I would not wish anyone to believe that our countries continue to raise issues that have caused problems for delegations in the past. We believe that this document is open, frank, and realistic, and

(Mr. Rey, Colombia)

deserves to be studied and analysed, because one of the major challenges to the Committee in the long run is the examination and definition of a question that is of such importance to everyone.

Lastly, I should like to express my satisfaction over the way in which these meetings are being held. I should also like to congratulate Mr. Fujita of Brazil for his election as Rapporteur of our Committee.

Mr. YIN Yubiao (China) (interpretation from Chinese): As this is the first time my delegation has spoken at this session, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your able chairmanship of this Committee. It is my sincere hope that, under your wise guidsance, the Committee will make new and important progress in its work. I should also like to thank the Secretariat members for their work. Their diligent efforts have provided the material basis for our deliberations.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) and the thirty-fifth anniversary of the launching of the first artificial satellite. The General Assembly at its forty-fourth session designated this year as International Space Year (ISY). This is mankind's first opportunity to celebrate at a global level the coming of the future space era. We are very pleased to note that the vigourous development of science and technology has enabled humanity to achieve rapid progress in outer space, which has in turn laid a solid foundation for the further exploration and peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit of all mankind. In conjunction with all this, space law has evolved gradually to include to date five international treaties, two declarations, and one principle, all of which have created conditions more propitious for carrying out space activities.

(Mr. Yin Yubiao, China)

The Chinese Government has always supported the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, making untiring efforts on its behalf and helping to implement it. The Chinese Government attaches great importance to ISY and has established a Chinese Preparatory Committee for that purpose. Under the leadership of this Committee, a series of international and national activities have been carried out.

This October, China and the International Academy of Astronautics will hold a joint international symposium on benefits from space activities in Beijing. The related materials on the background of the symposium are available in this room. At that time, a symposium on space science will be held in Xiamen to promote exchange and cooperation in the field of space science between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits. In order to promote understanding of space science and technology and their applications, and a wider spread of knowledge of space science, this year we will also broadcast a special television series entitled "International Space Year in China" and an educational programme on space science; edit and publish a series of books entitled Space, Earth and Human Beings; issue stamps in commemoration of ISY; and hold a stamp exhibition on international space activities. All this is aimed at enhancing the level of knowledge of the Chinese people.

It is my great pleasure to inform the Committee that the Chinese Government, in a gesture of sincere support for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the United Nations efforts on behalf of the ISY, has decided to make a voluntary contribution of $30,000 to that end.

It is our sincere hope that the activities of ISY will further promote and strengthen development and international cooperation on space science and

(Mr. Yin Yubiao, China)

technology in various countries, encouraging all of them - especially the developing countries - to participate in the application of space technology so as to make contributions to the protection and improvement of the Earth's environment and rational exploration space resources.

Along with the development of space technology in other countries, the space industry in China is making steady progress. Later this year we will launch two communications satellites for Australia with launching vehicle CZ-ZE and the thirteenth retrievable remote-sensing satellite of our own with Long March 2, which will also carry a Swedish postal communications satellite into orbit. China will construct a ground station with a 20-metre antenna to receive instruction data for a large-scale meteorological satellite. It is a huge ground station which works with a geostationary meteorological satellite to be launched as a complete system.

The ever-expanding scope of the application of space technology has benefited many countries. China has always lent importance to appliced satellite technology and the utilization of satellites. Guided by the policy of reform and opening to the outside world, China is making further efforts to conduct material exchanges, cooperate in space aviation, improve its applied satellite technology, and increase the level of its application technology.

(Mr. Yin Yubiao, China)

I should now like to offer some views on the items on the agenda of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Under the agenda item on ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, the deliberations on the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space have yet to make substantive headway. I should like to draw attention to what the world space Conference of 1982 stated in its report:

> "The maintenance of peace and security in outer space is of great importance for international peace and security. The prevention of an arms race and hostilities in outer space is an essential condition for the promotion and continuation of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes." (A/CONF.101/10, p. 5, para. 14)
>
> "All nations, in particular those with major space capabilities, are urged to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space and to refrain from any nation contrary to that aim." (Ibid., p. 5, para. 13)

The efforts made by the Committee to this end over the past decade are well known. The Chinese delegation would like to reiterate that, in order further to promote and strengthen the peaceful uses of outer space, effective measures must be taken to prevent the expansion of the arms race into outer space. The reduction in military confrontation currently taking place between the major Powers offers a good opportunity for us to protect the peaceful environment of outer space. The Chinese delegation stands ready to join with others in a common endeavour to explore feasible ways and means, through intensive consultation, of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.

With regard to the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and of the Legal Subcommittee, my delegation will make detailed comments in future

(Mr. Yin Yubiao, China)

statements. Therefore I shall limit myself here to expressing our satisfaction with the constant progress the two Subcommittees have made over the years.

The Chinese delegation is particularly concerned about the rate of progress in drafting a set of principles relevant to the use of nuclear power in outer space. In recent years, the issue of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space has figured prominently on the agendas of the two Subcommittees, and various delegations have put a lot of effort into it. The Chinese Government attaches much importance to the issue of the safe use of nuclear power sources in outer space, and hopes that the Committee will deploy its maximum efforts so that, on the basis of mutual understanding and cooperation, the drafting of a set of principles can be finalized during the current session, thus fulfilling the mandate given to the Committee by the General Assembly, and presenting those principles as the Committee's gift to the International Space Year. To this end, the Chinese delegation is willing to make positive efforts, together with other delegations.

The outer space Treaty affirms that the exploration and use of outer space should be carried on for the benefit of all mankind. The development of space technology has brought enormous benefits to mankind as a whole, and to those countries with major space capabilities in particular. To further the exploration and use of outer space and the development of space technology, it is necessary to strengthen international cooperation, including cooperation between the developed and the developing countries, between spacefaring States and non-spacefaring countries and between spacefaring States, with special emphasis on technical exchanges and technological transfers. China is a developing, spacefaring country with a limited space applications capability. Nevertheless, the Chinese Government is willing to strengthen exchanges and

(Mr. Yin Yubiao, China)

cooperation with other countries and make its own contribution to the peaceful exploration and use of outer space for the benefit of mankind.

To conclude, I should like to quote a paragraph from the report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space:

> "Space technology has made dramatic progress in our own lifetime. It has changed our concept of distance, made each person the neighbour of all others and given us a new measure of ourselves in relation to the cosmos. Can we now rid ourselves of our obsolescent biases and concepts, and move forward to the more equitable, humane and cooperative society that the image from space conjures up?" (A/CONF.101/10, p. 5, para. 15)

Mr. FULDA (Germany): First of all, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, under its highly capable Chairman Ambassador Hohenfellner, and its Subcommittees and Working Groups, on their outstanding work. The Federal Republic of Germany is prepared to continue to play an active role in the use of space for the benefit of us all.

Allow me to point out at this juncture that, this year, we can look back on 25 years of the outer space Treaty. The Federal Republic of Germany was among the signatories of the Treaty, which it ratified as early as 1967. Germany considers the continuous, harmonious development of space law to be an essential prerequisite for further progress in the peaceful use of space and space research, and also for flourishing international cooperation in space research and travel. In keeping with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and on the basis of the 1967 outer space Treaty, Germany is prepared to continue its active participation in the Committee's work and to bring its expertise to bear so that a legal framework for the

(Mr. Fulda, Germany)

space activities of States and international organizations can be created which will take into consideration the relevant technological developments and will accord, wherever possible, with the interests of all concerned.

As members know, Germany has demonstrated a particularly strong commitment since the debate on nuclear power sources began. Allow me to emphasize that whenever the danger of a nuclear accident posed by the re-entry of a satellite was imminent, particular fears were aroused in densely populated, small countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany. This required a political reaction from us, which has taken the shape of our intensive work on this Committee, especially in conjunction with the Canadian delegation.

Even before Cosmos 954, with SNAP 9A, SNAP 19 and Apollo 13/SNAP 27, there had been mishaps with satellites equipped with nuclear energy, and there have been incidents since 1978 as well. I recall the re-entry of Cosmos 1402 around the turn of 1982/83 and the re-entry of Cosmos 1900 in autumn 1988. On both occasions, there was a justified fear of releases of radioactivity, as happened in Canada in 1978. Since then, to avoid similar risks in future, we have been discussing safety principles for the use of nuclear power sources, and we hope that today, after 13 years, we have reached the end of the discussion.

We know that there are various methodological approaches to the substance of these principles; we will elaborate on this during the discussion on the catalogue of principles. It is, however, not premature to say that virtually all parties have shown an admirable degree of willingness to cooperate, thus making possible a text which, whilst not fulfilling all expectations, seems to represent the best we could hope for at present. Adding the finishing touches to this text is the prime task of this session.

(Mr. Fulda, Germany)

As always, this session also provides a forum for an exchange of information on national space activities during the past year. Let me therefore say this: the utilization of space and international cooperation in all branches of space activity rank high on Germany's agenda.

To back up that statement with specific examples, allow me to mention Germany's participation in international space projects. I would recall, for instance, the launch of the European remote-sensing satellite ERS-1, which Germany had a hand in developing and which will provide a tremendous boost for environmental protection through observations from space, and the x-ray satellite ROSAT, which has attracted the attention of scientists, since it has already played a valuable part in research into the universe. In a few weeks' time the unmanned platform EURECA will be launched for research under space conditions; it will open up new horizons for scientists.

In the field of manned space flights, highlights of the past year are the participation of a German scientist-astronaut in the International Microgravity Laboratory IML-1, and the project that enabled a German astronaut to be aboard the Russian space station Mir. In addition, preparations are under way for the D-2 space-lab mission planned together with the United States for early 1993.

In November 1991, Germany played host to a meeting of the Council of Ministers of the European Space Agency (ESA). That meeting, held at Munich, paved the way for increased international cooperation, something that has been made possible by changes in the world's political climate. The results of the conference reflect Germany's consistent endeavours to carry out space

(Mr. Fulda, Germany)

activities more and more under the umbrella of international cooperation. And finally, in March of this year Germany hosted the European Conference on the International Space Year.

Germany is also extremely interested in environmental observation and global development, which, as illustrated most recently a few days ago at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, is becoming the focus of increasing attention in the interests of preserving our natural environment.

Permit me to conclude by addressing a subject about which we are growing increasingly concerned, namely the large number of objects in space with uncontrolled trajectories, from the final stages of rockets to a plethora of small parts and particles. Taken together they pose a growing danger for all space activities. We are firmly convinced that overcoming this problem will be one of the central tasks for this Committee in the years ahead. For this reason too we hope that other topics that have been under discussion for a long time can be concluded so that the Committee can devote its attention to pressing new problems. We still have much work to do.

Let me assure members that Germany will continue to do everything possible to make a constructive contribution to the endeavours of the United Nations and of this Committee in the field of space activities.

Mr. TETU (Canada): My delegation is very pleased, Sir, to see you presiding once again over our deliberations. There is no doubt that under your able guidance we will be in a position to accomplish a lot. The energetic statement you delivered this morning was eloquent in that regard.

(Mr. Têtu, Canada)

As members are aware, my delegation, like most of the delegations that have already spoken to the issue of nuclear power sources, attaches great importance to the finalization at this session of the Committee of the draft principles on nuclear power sources. My delegation wishes in particular to echo your original statement, Mr. Chairman, in which you referred to the working non-papers produced by Mr. Franz Cede, Chairman of the working group on nuclear power sources, as a good basis for final compromise on outstanding issues. These working non-papers contain a certain number of concessions aimed at alleviating some concerns expressed, in particular with respect to principle 3, agreed to by consensus two years ago.

It is only normal that after 15 years of hard labour devoted to this issue the time has now come to conclude our work on it. It is, in our view, a matter of credibility for this Committee to demonstrate to the general public that it can be properly protected from harm caused by satellites containing nuclear power sources should they return to the Earth.

My delegation therefore calls upon those concerned to react to these working non-papers with a view to contributing to finalizing the principles at this session of the Committee. Only on the basis of such a reaction will we be in a position to terminate our work on this issue this year, contributing then meaningfully to the International Space Year.

Nineteen ninety-two has been declared International Space Year, and in addition to celebrating and publicizing human achievements in space we believe it is appropriate also to reflect on some of the deeper issues, such as the benefits that space science and technology have brought, the costs they have

(Mr. Têtu, Canada)

incurred, the promise of the future and the relations between the space community and the public at large.

The benefits of space science are familiar to all present here.

Satellite communications, more than anything else, has turned the Earth into a global village. When there is a world-championship football game, about one out of 10 inhabitants of our global village sit down in front of their televisions to watch it. When there is an armed conflict, hundreds of millions of global villagers see the destruction and the human suffering it causes.

Satellite remote sensing is used for an increasing number of applications. In the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee we heard how satellite data were used in coping with flood disasters, in fighting forest fires and in monitoring the situation of the Amazonian forests.

Space science has made important contributions to scientific knowledge and the scientific quest, one of mankind's highest aspirations. Man's presence in space fires the imagination of both adults and schoolchildren and motivates them to higher achievements.

These impressive benefits have also cost an impressive amount of money. As we all know, to be a serious participant in space research costs billions rather than millions of dollars. And it is Governments, and ultimately taxpayers, that have to pay these bills. During the past two or three years some Governments have shown increasing reluctance to increase space-research budgets or even to maintain them at previous levels. The general public, it appears, is not as enthusiastic about space as it used to be.

(Mr. Têtu, Canada)

During this International Space Year it is perhaps appropriate to reflect on the interaction between the space community and the general public. The Canadian space community in particular believes that there are two things we must do and two things we must not do to maintain the support of the public and our Government for the space programme.

The two things we must do are, first, to continue the record of major achievements that capture the attention of the media and, secondly, to continue a more patient and lower-profile effort to educate our citizens through our school system and our publications. Space research is one of mankind's most challenging and exciting ventures. We must communicate these challenges and achievements to our fellow citizens, and we must let them share our excitement.

The two things we must not do are, first, to pollute the space environment and, secondly, to threaten the safety of the general public.

(Mr. Têtu, Canada)

For many years those who found it inconvenient or costly to live up to their environmental responsibilities would invoke their own law of large numbers. They would ask "What does it matter if we cut down 10,000 trees, as long as there are still 10 million left in the forest?" Or they would say "What does it matter if we discharge a few hundred tons of gases into the atmosphere, since there are blllions of tons of air?" As we know, in many countries the public no longer accept these arguments, and they are making their feelings known to their Governments. Until now the space community has been saying "What does it matter if a few hundred cubic kilometres of space are filled with debris, since there are billions of cubic kilometres which are still empty?" We believe that the space community itself is already starting to suffer from this argument, in that some very important orbits and areas of outer space are subject to risks of more than 1 per cent of a collision in a five-year period. However, this suffering will be minor compared with what would happen if the general public were to start believing that the space community is environmentally irresponsible.

The issue of space environment is similar to other environmental issues, in that we are dealing with a global commons. It is not what one space launch does that causes the damage; it is the sum of many launches from many countries. If each country tries to maximize its national advantage and interests, all countries will end up the losers. The issue of space environment, similar to the issue of terrestrial environment, requires concerted action by many members of the international community. We believe that the Committee is an excellent forum to discuss and initiate such concerted action. We shall propose during the next two weeks that the Committee devote an increasing amount of attention to this issue.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): First, Sir, I should like to say how pleased we are to see you once again presiding over and guiding our important debates. We have for long witnessed your extremely valuable contribution to the discussion of the crucial issues on the agenda of the Committee and its Subcommittees, as well as the contribution made by your country. That is why I repeat that the delegation of Chile and my country feel that your being Chairman is a special guarantee of our success.

My delegation also believes that there are good and bad traditions. Among the good traditions is that which led us to choose as Rapporteur for this session the representative of Brazil, Mr. Edmundo Fujita, whom my country warmly congratulates. However, we regret the departure of not only a friend - Minister Flavio Perri - but an excellent representative of Brazil. We should like Mr. Fujita, our new friend, if I may call him that, to convey to Minister Perri our happiness at knowing that he is taking up important functions in Brazil's Foreign Ministry. I am sure that he is proud to do so.

Before I speak specifically about the most important items that the Committee is to consider I should like to mention one fact to which my country and the international community attach special importance: the convening by the Government of Chile from 25 to 29 January 1993 of the Second Space Conference of the Americas, whose honorary President will be the President of the Republic of Chile.

I hope that I do not seem presumptuous in saying that the international community attributes tremendous importance to such a Conference. At its last session the General Assembly adopted, on the report of the Special Political Committee, a resolution in one of whose operative paragraphs it welcomed, if I remember correctly, the offer of the Government of Chile to host the Conference.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

Therefore, to some extent we are responding to that. For the Conference to be as effective as possible, we should like it to be held within a regional context, but with the very important contribution and participation of many other countries with a great deal to say about space matters.

My Government decided to convene the Conference, despite a few weeks' delay for purely bureaucratic reasons, to give due weight to activities relating to the observance of International Space Year. At the national level this year a series of activities has already been held, involving the Committee on Space Matters, the Centre for Aeronautical and Space Law Studies, the Institute for International Studies of the University of Chile and other relevant Chilean academic institutions. These activities are in preparation for what we regard as a very important international event characterized by international cooperation without frontiers, whether ideological or geographical.

Going back in time, we recall participating in 1982 in the unforgettable world Conference, held in Vienna, in your country, Mr. Chairman. One of the paragraphs of the report of that Conference has become a true leitmotif for our delegation. I refer to the need continuously to strengthen the best ways and means, as sovereignly determined by the countries of a region, to strengthen regional cooperation on space issues and thus to determine the best ways to promote our economic and social development.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

We feel that time has proved us right. The resolution contained in the report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, UNISPACE 82, and subsequently approved in resolutions of the General Assembly up to and including at its forty-sixth session is, in our opinion, relevant to the important Conference on Environment and Development recently held at Rio de Janeiro.

Along with the concrete achievements realized by the conclusion and signing of international agreements and the positive readiness of the world community to assist those suffering from environmental problems, from poverty, from excessive population growth, from problems related to biodiversity and so on, the Conference demonstrated that one of the most fitting and effective methods of determining the extent of environmental deterioration is the one provided by space technology. That is the first element.

With regard to the second, it is obvious that the question cannot be considered in isolation and that it is only on the basis of concerted action, on the basis of joint activities and common understandings, that we can ultimately reduce and restrict some of the factors that are seriously threatening the Earth's environment.

In this connection the convening of the Second Space Conference of the Americas in Chile has its own very particular rationale, since this is a subject - one also tackled recently at the Rio de Janeiro Conference - that must be taken up there by the various Government representatives.

In the same vein, my delegation feels that it is important to note that on 2 April of this year the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile, on behalf of the Chilean Government, addressed invitations to attend this Conference to his colleagues of the region. We believe it is important that that meeting be attended by both political and technical personalities at the highest level

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

and that it be more than a mere forum for scientific and technological exchange - which can, of course, be very useful - and that it provide an opportunity for reaching agreements on specific, logical and suitable formulas, to be determined by the participating countries themselves, for promoting international cooperation.

I should now like to make a few brief comments on some of the other questions we will be discussing at this session. We have particular views with regard to some of them. For example, if we examine the fate of the agenda item on ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, we find that no progress at all has been achieved on this question, neither on its substance nor in terms of deciding to which of the competent bodies it should be entrusted. We have repeatedly been told that the proper body is the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, under the aegis of the Conference on Disarmament. Yet that body has no negotiating mandate, and since 1985 it has been unable to come up with any document. We therefore feel that this area has been marked by a total lack of success.

At the same time, it is inappropriate that our Committee should play no role in this connection. It could, for example, have a role in the area of technical assistance, at least some kind of liaison that could enable us - as we stated last year at Graz - to share in some of the knowledge gained in Geneva. I am a participant in that Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and I can thus speak from personal knowledge. I believe that, given the United Nations structure, it is only logical to expect that there be at least a minimal exchange of information among the various bodies that are involved with this subject.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

We also feel that the whole question could be viewed in another light, and that we might wish to consider it within a broader context of international security, for the new concepts of international security that are emerging - as a consequence of the end of the cold war - also need to be taken into account.

On the other hand, we are also concerned with the question of the definition and delimitation of outer space. We have seen no recent progress whatsoever on this subject. Nevertheless, we must note that at the last session of the Legal Subcommittee at Geneva the delegation of the Russian Federation made an interesting contribution, which was set forth in a working paper (A/AC.105/C.2/L.189), entitled "Questions concerning the legal régime for aerospace objects". At that time we noted that the subject deserved to be examined in a constructive spirit, and we are still prepared to do so. Such an examination might at least point to a way in which the problem might be solved, although not, perhaps, in its entirety, and help to give substance to an issue that has been lacking in it so far.

With regard to the opinions to which I referred earlier, we have viewed with some optimism the important and valuable effort made by the delegation of Colombia to come up with a new, fresh and enlightened position with regard to the question of the geostationary orbit. We are greatly appreciative of that effort. The working non-paper on the subject circulated for discussion during the Legal Subcommittee's session led to an interesting and important discussion in the Working Group, and we should like to pay a tribute to the representative of Argentina, who guided its work so admirably.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

We feel that there is now an atmosphere of goodwill and a spirit of negotiation with regard to this item that has not existed in the past. Thus, we should like to request the Ambassador of Colombia to submit that informal document as a formal proposal so that it may have some clear official status and so that we can discuss its substance and report it to our countries on a more concrete basis. This is a sign of real progress, and we welcome it.

Another area in which there has been clear progress - and even, one could say, in which an agreement seems imminent - concerns the uses of nuclear power sources in space.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

This effort has been admirably led, Sir, by two of your compatriots, Dr. Franz Cede, and my good friend, the Minister Counsellor of the Austrian Mission to the United Nations, Dr. Helmut Freudenschuss. Both demonstrated their great diplomatic skill in carrying out this important task. Unfortunately, because of a question of details, no agreement resulted. We would like to point out, however, especially to the delegation of Canada, that we shall do our very best to make sure that such an agreement is finalized, we hope, during the course of this session.

We are also concerned that this agreement might create a void - in other words, that once this question has been taken off the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee, we may feel that we have nothing more to negotiate. Nothing could be further from the truth. The main thrust of the statements made by all delegations, at this session as well as at previous sessions, makes it clear that the issue of space debris is a recurrent source of concern to everyone.

In this connection, my Government would also like clear regulations on this issue. We have had the opportunity of reading an extremely interesting document on the question of space debris drawn up by a United States governmental agency - whose name, unfortunately, I cannot recall at this time - that sheds legal and political light of the utmost importance on this matter. Hence, there seems to be an emerging consensus to continue considering this issue.

I cannot conclude my remarks without referring to the item on spin-off benefits of space technology, the Working Group on which I have had the honour and the privilege of presiding, with the important collaboration of all representatives. In my opinion, contrary to what the pessimists believed,

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

this issue has led to a very special exchange of views, characterized by divergent points of view, by arguments that have been expressed, heatedly at times, but always with respect and sensitivity. This resulted in a discussion in which all delegations - regardless of their country's economic or social standing, relative power or capacity as a space Power - participated constructively in the consideration of an informal document presented by a group of countries members of the Group of 77, which includes my own country.

This was an undoubtedly useful debate, so much so that some of the delegations that attended the Geneva meeting, immediately after hearing the observations made to them, hastened to carry out a very in-depth, detailed review in order to try to put in concrete form in new documents the concerns that had been expressed in order to give this new item - if I may coin a phrase - a trans-ideological character that would bring all States together harmoniously.

It is important that the central theme underlying this aspect of the agenda - that is, international cooperation - be comprehensively considered, analysed and assessed, that we proceed to reflect upon, for example, what is the true legal and political scope of the right and duty of States to cooperate with other States, in keeping with the relevant international instruments, such as the United Nations Charter and General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV), and the general principles of international law. We must also reflect upon the manner in which these instruments are taken into account at the multilateral level, not in competition with the bilateral relationship, but to see how to maintain compatibility in the bilateral relations a country sovereignly determines it can carry out with another country, without undermining or prejudicing opportunities to maintain an

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

effective multilateral participation, so that the work of this United Nations organ, which is so important, can also be nurtured.

We believe that with respect to this new item, we must also have as a frame of reference the mandate emanating from the commemoration of International Space Year, which is linked to that of the UNISPACE 82 Conference, since the intent of both the report of that Conference and the commemoration of International Space Year is to stress that international cooperation is essential.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I thank my friend the representative of Chile for his very relevant contribution to our deliberations, and, in particular, for his remarks concerning the Second Space Conference of the Americas, to be held in Chile next year.

(spoke in English)

I now call on the representative of the European Space Agency (ESA).

Mr. ARETS (European Space Agency (ESA)) (interpretation from French): I thank the Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak on a few of the activities of the European Space Agency and on how it is cooperating with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and other United Nations bodies to make space technology more useful and more accessible to as many people as possible in the interest of mankind.

Since the last session of the Committee, there have been two major events for the European Space Agency: the launching of the ERS-1 satellite and the Munich Ministerial Conference.

First, owing to the excellent functioning of the set of instruments on board the ERS-1 satellite, Europe is making available to the world an important tool for measuring the phenomena affecting our environment.

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Numerous ground stations are receiving images from ERS-1, not only in those countries participating in the programme in Europe and in Canada, but also in the United States, Japan, India, Australia and Ecuador, and soon in Brazil and later in South-East Asia and East Africa.

The ERS-1 satellite is the first European satellite equipped with radar that allows for the gathering of data by day as well as by night, no matter how cloudy the conditions. Its advantage, therefore, is of particular importance in the tropical regions, and programmes for its use in these regions are currently being developed, especially the TREES project, which the Agency will undertake with the EC Commission and interested countries in tropical regions.

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The satellite's life span is three years, and the ERS-2 satellite will be launched in late 1994 so as to guarantee the continuity of data gathering. Later, the POEM polar platform will take over the relay in 1998.

This European programme, designed to use space technology in order to get to know better and thus protect our environment, should be viewed in a global context. The Agency wishes to develop to the maximum its compatibilities and coherence with the other systems being established throughout the world. The Agency has long cooperated with the United States, since the polar-platform project originated in the Space Station programme. It wishes to provide exchanges of data with Russian Radar satellites. We are pleased with the ongoing cooperation with Japan and wish to welcome on this occasion the success of the mission of the Japanese JERS satellites and the interesting comparison of results of the two Japanese and European satellites.

The various systems being established should be considered as important contributions to the goals of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development that has just concluded in Rio de Janeiro. The Agency, which had observer status, made a contribution to the Conference's work that shows the usefulness of space technology for the environment and development alike. The document will be available in this room in English, Spanish and French over the next few days. This undertaking of the Agency is in the same spirit as that of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), which met in London at the initiative of the British Prime Minister and also presented conclusions of its work at the Rio Conference.

The second major event of the year for ESA was the Ministerial Conference in Munich, during the course of which the European Ministers were to take decisions on the important European programmes in development. Two basic guideline areas emerged on this occasion. The first was the importance

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accorded by the Ministers to Earth and environmental observation satellites. A special resolution was devoted to these programmes and demonstrated their importance in the context of European and world cooperation.

The second guideline area was the study of geopolitical developments in recent years and their influence on space programmes. While confirming the objectives of the Agency and its programmes, the Ministers expressed the wish that an effort be made to take into account the new possibilities for international cooperation that are available today.

Various elements justify an effort towards further development by the international community. The end of East-West confrontation allows us to consider cooperation that was inconceivable a few years ago. These new paths of cooperation need to be explored. The cost of space programmes is such that the broadest possible cooperation is becoming essential for all of us if they are to be implemented. Further, space programmes - be it a question of the exploration of space and missions to the Moon or Mars, or of applied programmes such as environment monitoring - are of universal import, and the broadest participation in their implementation and use is in the general interest. Today, when questions of national prestige and military threats have, thankfully, lost their importance, a new and innovative approach is called for.

For several months, the Agency has therefore increased its international contacts and discussed with various partners the possibilities for cooperation. These seem to be promising, but any large-scale international cooperation requires lengthy and painstaking efforts. This cooperation is envisaged both with the Agency's traditional partners, such as Canada and the United States, and with Russia and the other countries of the Commmonwealth of

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Independent States, as well as with Japan. For example, a meeting between Japan and ESA is taking place at this very moment in Europe.

Obviously, the Agency is pursuing at the same time its cooperation with many other countries, and I wish to cite in particular the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The Agency has already signed a cooperation agreement with Hungary; it is concluding its negotiation of an aggeement with Poland and Romania; and has commenced discussions with the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic.

The European Ministers will be meeting in Spain in November. It is to be hoped that decisions will be taken on the European programmmes. Taking into account the budgetary constraints of many States, the scope of this programme will perhaps have to be narrowed or deferred. The future of international cooperation will play an important role in the Ministers' decision, and I should like to state that ESA, which is itself the result of a 30-year cooperation between 13 European countries, is in a particularly good position to appreciate the merits of enhanced cooperation.

Before concluding, I should like to recall that the Agency is pursuing its exemplary cooperation with the Office for Outer Space Affairs. Within the context of its training activities, the Agency is participating on a broad scale in many of the activities undertaken by the outer space Office, just as it cooperates with other United Nations institutions, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Specifically with regard to the United Nations contribution to the International Space Year (ISY), the Agency has provided telemonitoring satellite data to Tunisia, Morocco, Guinea, Niger and Nigeria. These data are intended to contribute to the better implementation of pilot projects already under way in those countries, which

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are all located in the coverage zone of either the Fucino receiving station in Italy or that of Maspalomas on the Canary Islands in Spain.

The Agency intends to organize a practical training programme linked to the use of data for the implementation of these pilot projects, if possible this year.

As to the ISY, I should like to recall that the Agency is participating actively in many projects that have been developed in the context of the ISY, and is also participating in the activities of the European Association for the ISY (EURISY). Together with the German Space Agency, the EC Commission and EURISY, ESA organized the main event in Europe for the ISY: the Munich Conference that took place in the beginning of April, with the motto "Space in the service of a changing world". This Conference brought together more than 1,500 scientists, engineers, administrators, and politicians from all the European countries, and certainly contributed broadly to awakening European public opinion to the usefulness of space technologies for mankind as a whole and to a better understanding between the operators of space systems and the various user communities.

The ESA looks forward to pursuing with the Committee and under your chairmanship, Sir, a cooperation that began over 20 years ago. the Agency could suggest a model of international cooperation in this respect, and is ready to share with all Member States its experience in this field.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.